



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

### **Proposed Critical Habitat California Tiger Salamander, Sonoma County Population**

#### **Questions and Answers**

Prepared by the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office  
June 2011

**Q. Why is the Service reopening the public comment period for the proposed critical habitat for the Sonoma County California tiger salamander?**

A. We are revising the critical habitat proposal because during the public comment period for the revised critical habitat in 2010, we received new information from a peer reviewer that a portion of the Santa Rosa Plain Unit likely consists of a metapopulation with multiple known breeding sites. The information provided to us at that time noted that there are three known breeding sites for the Sonoma County DPS of the California tiger salamander in the Roblar Road area.

The purpose of this revision to the proposed critical habitat is to better delineate the areas that contain the physical or biological features essential to the conservation of the species and that meet the definition of critical habitat for the California tiger salamander in Sonoma County.

**Q. Where is the proposed additional 4,945 acres located?**

A. We propose revising Unit 1 (Santa Rosa Plain Unit) to add an area that was not previously included in the proposal. This area includes an additional 4,945 acres in the vicinity of Roblar Road. The land added is similar to the rest of the proposed critical habitat in terms of land ownership and land use and type.

**Q. How will I know if my property is inside or outside of the proposed critical habitat area?**

A. Please refer to the map on the last page of this Q & A.

**Q. Has the Service considered the economic impacts as required under the Act for this addition to the proposed rule?**

A. Yes. The same independent firm, Industrial Economics Inc., is analyzing the economic effects associated with the addition. The analysis will be included as an addendum in the Final Economic Analysis, which will be published with the Final Rule.

**Q. What information is the Service requesting during the reopened comment period?**

**A.** The Service is requesting information and comments on the revised proposed rule to designate critical habitat for the Sonoma County Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of the California tiger salamander that was published January 18, 2011. We are particularly seeking comments related to the proposed addition in this revised proposed designation, although comments are accepted on any portion of the proposed rule and the Draft Economic Analysis. More specific information can be found in the Federal Register Docket No. FWS–R8–ES–2009–0044.

**Q. Who should submit information?**

**A.** The Service is requesting comments or information from the public, other concerned government agencies, the scientific community, industry, or other interested parties.

**Q: How can I learn more?**

**A:** In order to better inform the public and explain the proposed addition, we will hold two information sessions on June 29, 2011 at the Finley Community Center, 2060 West College Ave, Santa Rosa, CA 95401. The first session will be from 1:00 p.m. to 3 p.m. and the second will be from 6 to 8 p.m. Please join us.

**Q. What is critical habitat?**

**A.** The Endangered Species Act defines critical habitat as the geographic areas that contain features essential for the conservation of the species and that may require special management consideration. Designation of critical habitat does not affect land ownership or establish a refuge, wilderness, reserve, preserve or other conservation area. It does not allow government or public access to private lands.

Critical habitat is protected through provisions of the Endangered Species Act that require Federal agencies to consult with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) on actions they carry out, fund, or authorize that may adversely affect critical habitat. It does not mean that projects cannot go forward, but means that Federal agencies must consult with the Service to make sure critical habitat is not destroyed or adversely modified. In this way, critical habitat protects areas that are currently unoccupied by the species, but are needed for the recovery of the species. A critical habitat designation generally has no effect on projects or activities that have no federal agency involvement.

**Q. Where are we in the process of designating critical habitat for the Sonoma County Distinct Population Segment of California tiger salamander?**

**A.** After the close of the public-comment period, the Service will analyze all comments and information, including comments by solicited peer reviewers, and address them in a final rule. The date on which we previously agreed to submit the final rule to the Federal Register was July

1, 2011. We have received a 60-day extension on our court-ordered date to publish the final rule; therefore it is now due to the Federal Register by September 1, 2011.

